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ARTICLES:

(1) Uru association proposes to defense minister relocating Futenma base to Iwo Jima

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 1) (Full)
October 30, 2009

TOKYO - On Oct. 29 the "Uru no Kai (Uru Association)," which is

formed of seven Upper and Lower House members, elected from Okinawa Prefecture, from the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the People's New Party (PNP), and an independent, met with Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa in the Diet building and proposed relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa to Iwo Jima (Ogasawara Village, Tokyo). The Uru Association is chaired by Upper House member Shokichi Kina. After the meeting, Kina quoted Kitazawa as saying, "We are looking into various options. I regard your proposal as one of them."

All seven association members attended the meeting with Kitazawa. With regard to the relocation site for the Futenma base, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada is considering a plan to integrate it with Kadena Air Base, while Kitazawa has expressed his intention to accept the current plan to transfer it to the Henoko district.

The seven association members have become increasingly alarmed as they believe that government officials are mulling relocating the base within the prefecture. The Uru Association, therefore, proposed the idea of relocating it out of Okinawa. This is the first time the association has made to the government a specific proposal citing the candidate relocation site by name. However, some association members are skeptical of the feasibility of the proposal.

Iwo Jima is an island located 1,380 kilometers east of the mainland Okinawa. It has an area of about 22 square kilometers. The island has a Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) base with a 2,600-meter runway and no residents. Carrier-based aircraft from U.S. Naval Air Facility Atsugi have temporarily been conducting night-landing practice (NLP) on Iwo Jima.

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In 2005 Naha Mayor Takeshi Onaga proposed the idea of relocating the Futenma base to Iwo Jima. The predominant view is that the U.S. side is negative about the idea from the standpoint of living conditions on the island.

In January 2006, Onaga met with and proposed the idea to Tokyo Gov. Shintaro Ishihara and Kanagawa Gov. Shigefumi Matsuzawa.

(2) Poll of heads of Okinawa municipalities on Futenma Air Station relocation: Thirty-four opt for relocation outside prefecture or nation

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 1) (Full)
October 30, 2009

The Okinawa Times conducted by Oct. 29 a poll of heads of 41 municipalities in Okinawa Prefecture on a relocation site for the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station prior to the November 8 Okinawan Residents Rally to Oppose the Construction of a New Military Base in Henoko and the Relocation of Base Functions within the Prefecture. Of 41 municipal heads, 34 responded "outside the prefecture or the nation is desirable." Among those who in the previous poll accepted the idea of shifting the relocation site offshore by reviewing the present plan (relocation to Henoko, Nago City), four gave the answer "outside the prefecture" or "outside the nation." Among those who suspended judgment in the previous poll, six opted for "outside the prefecture" this time. Municipal heads' opinions have changed due to the uncertainty surrounding the relocation issue as a result of the change of administration.

To a question about relocation site, the largest number, 15, opted for "outside the prefecture." Nine responded "outside the nation." The answer "either outside the prefecture or the nation" was given by 10 pollees. Only three supported the option of moving the site offshore, as sought by Governor Hirokazu Nakaima, by revising the current plan, which Japan and the U.S. agreed to. No pollees called for integrating the Futenma functions into existing base facilities such as Kadena Air Base in the prefecture.

Nago Mayor Yoshikazu Shimabukuro, who supported an option for shifting the relocation site offshore in the previous poll, refrained from giving any reply, saying, "I want the government to formulate a policy direction so that the plan can be realized at an

early date."

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada has proposed integrating the Futenma facilities into Kadena Air Base. Kadena Mayor Tokujitsu Miyagi changed his answer from "other option given in the previous poll" to "outside the prefecture." For the first time he took the position of supporting the idea of relocating the facilities outside the prefecture, saying, "Since it is a pledge made by the government, from now I will call for relocation outside the prefecture."

As reasons for his shift in stance, he said, "The people of Okinawa elected the candidate who called for the relocation of the base outside the prefecture. Their selection carries special weight. I cannot accept the idea of integrating the functions into Kadena Air Base, either."

Many municipal chiefs called for relocating the facilities outside the prefecture or the nation. However, only 14 announced their

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intention to attend the rally.

As reasons for not taking part in the rally, many gave the answer "due to other official business." Some municipal heads were skeptical about the meaning of holding such a rally with Urasoe City Mayor Mitsuo Gima, noting, "There is a lack of discussion for shaping a consensus among the people," or, as Miyakojima City Mayor Toshihiko Shimoji said, "The government should present its view to the people of Okinawa first." Itoman City Mayor Hirotsune Uehara said, "We cannot oppose relocation within the prefecture when the government has yet to come up with its policy."

(3) "Ronten" column: Give consideration to U.S. reaction to East Asian community concept

MAINICHI (Page 12) (Full)
October 30, 2009

Koji Murata, Doshisha University professor specializing in international relations

In his recent policy speech to the Diet, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama termed the four seas surrounding Japan "fruitful seas (of friendship and solidarity)" and defined his proposed East Asian community concept as a highly transparent community for cooperation for an "economy for the people" and in the area of "people's lives and culture."

It is easy to imagine that the above will be criticized as honorable but abstract. However, the Prime Minister also talked about concrete issues, such as disaster prevention and relief and public health. These are all important areas. For sure, one may say that enumerating these topics and calling them the concept of an East Asian Community is an exaggeration. However, exaggerated expressions do sometimes influence people's mental images, thus transforming them into reality.

Furthermore, those who claim that the East Asian Community will not be realized may be looking only at the goal and not paying attention to the process of reaching the goal. The process is probably more important than the goal in this type of debate. This is because this process will serve to enhance a relationship of trust, predictability, and transparency. The same is true with the ideal of a "world without nuclear weapons" advocated by President Barack Obama.

Nevertheless, the Asia-Pacific region is a vast area characterized by diversity. If the concept is not supported by meticulous coordination efforts, the East Asian Community may end up as a spur-of-the-moment idea or a grand pipe dream.

The membership of this community is also important. Prime Minister Hatoyama says that he does not intend to exclude the U.S. For sure, the United States has, at times, overreacted to the East Asian Community concept. However, it is also undeniable that when regional cooperation in Asia was discussed in the past, there had often been

a latent tendency to eliminate or reduce U.S. influence. Showing a certain measure of understanding and consideration for the U.S.'s overreaction is in line with and does not contradict the spirit of yuai (fraternity) advocated by the Prime Minister.

Certain Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) members are particularly

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keen on demonstrating the party's difference from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in foreign and security policy. However, if they only mean pursuing the strengthening of relations with Asia and reinforcing the Japan-U.S. relationship at the same time, the LDP's Fukuda cabinet had already championed a synergy of diplomacy with Asia and America. In the first place, emphasis on the Japan-U.S. relationship, Japan's role in Asia, and a UN-centric diplomacy have long been the three basic principles of Japan's foreign policy.

If Hatoyama diplomacy intends to broaden the scope of past diplomacy by proposing such slogans as the East Asian Community or a "close and equal Japan-U.S. relationship," it should present a comprehensive vision. If it is merely enumerating various topics under the East Asian Community and is unable to make any alternative proposals for the refueling mission of the Maritime Self-Defense Force in the Indian Ocean or the plan to relocate the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station, this is far from a comprehensive vision of foreign affairs.

If the administration continues to buy time on key issues without any underlying strategy, it will not be possible to pursue a "close and equal Japan-U.S. relationship." And, if the bilateral relationship becomes unstable, Japan's status and presence in Asia and the Pacific will be seriously undermined.

(4) Editorial: Japan's indecisiveness on Afghanistan policy pushing its allies into a tighter corner

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 30, 2009

A terrorist group stormed a guesthouse being used by UN staff in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, killing more than 10 people. In the run-up to the presidential runoff election set for Nov. 7, the security situation is rapidly deteriorating in Afghanistan. In its neighbor, Pakistan, too, terrorist attacks are intensifying recently.

The international community can no longer be a passive onlooker. Despite such a situation, Japan, an ally of the U.S., remains unable to come up with effective countermeasures.

A spokesman for the Taliban, an anti-government Islamic fundamentalist group, claimed responsibility for the guesthouse attack, calling it "the first attack" to block the runoff election. The Afghan military should make utmost efforts to prevent terrorist attacks in cooperation with U.S. troops in Afghanistan and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

The election must be carried out without fail so that a new government can end the current culture of corruption and have legitimacy. To that end, it is important first to restore public order in the nation. In the election in August, a total of 300,000 persons, including U.S. military troops, ISAF members, and Afghan national troops, were mobilized to prevent terrorist attacks. Despite such efforts, many attacks targeting polling stations took place across the nation. The attacks took a heavy toll in lives.

An unprecedentedly large number of troops and citizens have been killed in Afghanistan. Under such a situation, the upcoming runoff vote will indisputably become a crucial stage in the war on terror. U.S. President Barack Obama will soon announce plans to send more

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troops to Afghanistan. We expect the measure will have a deterrent effect.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown announced that Britain will send 500 more troops to Afghanistan on the condition that other NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) members assume a burden commensurate with their status. Britain has dispatched 9,000 troops - the second largest number after the U.S. - to that nation. The prime minister believes that "the stable situation in Afghanistan will contribute to ensure the security of Britain."

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama also should also be alarmed. In his policy speech, he specified three civilian support measures for the Afghanistan: agricultural support; vocational training for former soldiers; and reinforcement of police functions. In view of the security situation in that nation, however, these measures are considered unrealistic.

Since the security situation has deteriorated to this extent in Afghanistan, if civilians are dispatched, they will always have to be guarded by military personnel. The plans involving the dispatch of civilians will have to be postponed.

The U.S. and Britain have greatly appreciated Japan's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, but the government has said it would not simply extend the mission. This policy stance is still incomprehensible to us.

During his recent round of visits to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada told his Pakistan counterpart, "Japan is considering what approach it should take after the expiration of the law (endorsing the refueling mission)." This inarticulate remark shows that the government remains unable to devise any appropriate measures. Japan's indecisiveness is pushing its allies into a tighter corner.

(5) Prime Minister intends to reexamine Japan-U.S. alliance to build an equal alliance

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
October 30, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama yesterday unveiled a plan to comprehensively reexamine the Japan-U.S. alliance, including Japan's burden sharing (omoiyari yosan or literally "sympathy budget", i.e., host nation support) for U.S. forces stationed in Japan. Hatoyama apparently has in mind such issues as the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa and revision of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that have been advocated by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). The announcement also reflects his firm determination to build an equal Japan-U.S. alliance under the new administration. His statement that might end up overturning what was agreed upon between the two countries is certain to draw a backlash from the United States. His announcement has also caused a stir in the Japanese government.

"I want to carry out a comprehensive review of the modalities of the Japan-U.S. alliance," Hatoyama said in response to a question during a House of Councillors plenary session yesterday. "We were an opposition party, so we couldn't have full access to information," Hatoyama said later to the press corps at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). "With the Japan-U.S. alliance as a

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basis, we would like to examine such issues as host nation support, SOFA, and Futenma in a comprehensive manner. It takes time to examine those issues."

In his Diet reply, Hatoyama also said that the government will examine various options for the relocation of Futenma Air Station. Although the cabinet is in disarray over the relocation site for Futenma, the Prime Minister apparently expressed a plan to examine all possibilities based on his and DPJ's calls for moving Futenma out of Okinawa or even Japan.

The Japan-U.S. alliance was strengthened under the administrations of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). In April 1996, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and President Bill Clinton issued the Japan-U.S.

Joint Declaration on Security. Based on this, the governments of Japan and the United States established the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) to discuss the realignment/reduction of U.S. bases and basically agreed to return Futenma Air Station. The two governments subsequently decided to relocate Futenma to the coastal area of Camp Schwab.

"We created that situation in a democratic, kind, and transparent fashion," Fukushima Nukaga said at yesterday's meeting of the LDP Nukaga faction, highlighting the validity of the existing relocation plan. Nukaga was serving as defense chief when the Japan-U.S. agreement was reached.

Meanwhile, the DPJ, in its campaign pledge for the 2007 House of Councillors election, criticized the existing plan, saying that the LDP-New Komeito administration's approach of prioritizing the intergovernmental agreement will undermine public trust, the foundation of the Japan-U.S. alliance. On Oct. 26 Prime Minister Hatoyama delivered a policy speech in which he again underlined his intention to build "a close and equal Japan-U.S. alliance."

Hatoyama's statement (on reviewing the Japan-U.S. alliance) is likely to create a sensation at home and abroad. (In 2005), then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld managed to adopt the existing Futenma relocation plan in defiance of U.S. Forces Japan's opposition to moving the air station. "If the agreement is overturned, everything will return to square one," according to a source with intimate knowledge of Japan-U.S. relations and familiar with the bilateral talks that led to the agreement. The source spoke with a concerned look.

The Foreign Ministry, which plays a central role in talks with the United States, also fears that the Hatoyama statement might alter the country's foreign/security policy. "It is difficult to review (the Japan-U.S. alliance), including the SOFA, when Tokyo and Washington are already at odds over the Futenma relocation," a senior ministry official said disapprovingly.

(6) "Seiron" column: Too big a price to pay for "equal Japan-U.S. relationship"

SANKEI (Page 7) (Full)
October 30, 2009

Naoyuki Agawa, professor at Keio University

Japan has spoken up in the past

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Forty days have passed since the inauguration of the Hatoyama administration. While I pray for the success of this government elected by an overwhelming majority of voters, there are many things about this administration that I do not understand. The policy of "building a close and equal relationship" in the Democratic Party of Japan's manifesto is particularly incomprehensible to me.

During his recent visit to the United States, the Prime Minister did not discuss an "equal" relationship in his meeting with President Barack Obama. The explanation given was that the trip was meant to build a relationship of trust and specific issues would not be mentioned.

However, the policy of an "equal Japan-U.S. relationship" is not a concept that refers to specific issues, but one that governs the basic conduct of bilateral relations. In that sense, the substance of the domestic pledge made by the DPJ administration has not been conveyed to the all-important other party in this relationship. Moreover, the Prime Minister stated at a subsequent summit meeting with the leaders of China and South Korea that Japan will cease being over-dependent on the U.S. and give greater attention to Asia. This must leave the U.S. side wondering what is meant by an "equal Japan-U.S. relationship."

In the first place, this pledge to "build an equal Japan-U.S. relationship" rests on the assumption that heretofore the

relationship has been unequal. This pledge has been depicted ambiguously with expressions such as "we will build a relationship under which both sides are able to speak up candidly from now on," but as far as I know, recent prime ministers have all spoken up "candidly." The more fundamental question is how the Japan-U.S. relationship has been "unequal."

The issue is what to do in the future

To begin with, the bilateral relationship is not a relationship of countries equal in size or physical resources. The United States has a larger territory, bigger population, higher GNP, and most of all, overwhelmingly stronger military power. Before World War II, Japan tried to match U.S. national power through disarmament negotiations, territorial expansion, a military buildup, and pan-Asianism. It failed. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama undoubtedly does not have in mind a Japan-U.S. relationship of equals in this sense.

Japan lost everything through defeat in the war and was placed under U.S. occupation. This was the period when the bilateral relationship was most unequal. However, even after the restoration of independence, Japan made a conscious choice to be unequal with the U.S. in military power, with the result it had a weak national defense, so it concluded a security treaty with the U.S. and sheltered under America's nuclear umbrella. That is the basic structure of the present Japan-U.S. security arrangement.

However, relying on another country for defense is incompatible with an equal relationship between independent countries. Therefore, Japan has striven to improve its own defense capability, contribute to world security, and provide bases in Okinawa (of great geopolitical value to the U.S. global strategy), to ensure reciprocity without taking up mutual defense obligations, and to maintain the security alliance. Despite various constitutional, legal, and political constraints, Japan has striven to realize an equal bilateral relationship in real terms. I believe that as a

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result, the present Japan-U.S. relationship is equal.

If Prime Minister Hatoyama and the new administration still think that the current Japan-U.S. relationship is unequal and needs to be rectified, the question is what they are going to do about it.

The manifesto states on the one hand that Japan will "share roles with the U.S." and "positively fulfill" its responsibility, but suggests the revision of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and a "review" of the USFJ realignment plans and U.S. military bases in Japan. The latter specifically refers to the relocation of the Futenma Air Station out of Okinawa and the discontinuation of the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, while the former is limited only to abstract expressions. Pursuing only the latter under the present circumstances may even incur the risk of destabilizing the Japan-U.S. relationship.

Indifference to the other party's position is unacceptable

The other party certainly deserves to be heard on whether the Japan-U.S. relationship is equal or not. Some U.S. observers contend that Japan and the U.S. are unequal in their shares of the cost of the security arrangement -- a contention of which the Japanese are not fully aware. If discussions about ending the refueling mission and relocating the Futenma base out of Okinawa continue, it would not be surprising if Japan were asked to play a bigger role and assume greater responsibility in security.

If Japan agrees to this, it may have to bear a heavier burden than at present. On the other hand, if it objects or resists, Japan will be widely perceived as a country that is shifting its focus from the Japan-U.S. alliance to Asia, abhors U.S. military bases and hopes to step out from under nuclear umbrella, and advocates banning the first use of nuclear weapons, but is reluctant to do its share for the maintenance of world security. Like in Japan, public opinion is also influential in America. Congress may well demand a drastic cut in the United States' commitment to the defense of a country that refuses to shoulder its share of the responsibility. In that case a

Japan-U.S. relationship that has been close and practically equal might cease to be either.

The relocation of the Futenma base out of Okinawa and the discontinuation of the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean should not be Japan's foreign policy goals. Rather, their effectiveness as means to achieve Japan's security and prosperity should be reviewed. Likewise, the building of an equal bilateral relationship per se should not be a goal. Rather the purpose of striving for equality and Japan's concrete goals should be clarified. The administration will not be able to convince the people if it is only driven by the emotional impulse for independence since the twilight of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the dawn of the Meiji government.

Certain officials in the administration already know this well. But there are those who don't. So that the Japan-U.S. relationship isn't set adrift, I hope discussions of these issues will be a little closer to a conclusion before President Obama visits Japan.

(Corrected copy): Government to lead review of JAL rebuilding plan

NIKKEI (Top play) (Lead para.)
October 30, 2009

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Transport Minister Seiji Maehara on Oct. 29 formally announced a policy of using the Enterprise Turn around Initiative Corporation (ETIC) a public organization, for the corporate rehabilitation of Japan Airlines (JAL). JAL will formulate a rebuilding plan under the ETIC. Support measures will possibly be set in January next year. The ETIC will look into reinforcing the company's capital base using public money and substantively cutting the corporate pension. A task force under the transport ministry has been leading the work of turning around JAL. However, from now on, the JAL rehabilitation plan will be reviewed with the government proactively involved in the process.

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